



ADOPTION SERVICES IN GEORGIA

Finding Permanent and Loving Homes for the children in the permanent custody of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

DFCS LEADERSHIP:

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See a photo and profile of
our children who are
available for adoption at:
www.itsmyturnnowga.com

At any given time, there are hundreds of children in the permanent custody of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) due to unresolved family crises. Most of the children come from difficult situations and live in foster homes. If the child is available for adoption, the parents may have voluntarily surrendered their parental rights, but usually these rights were terminated by the court system due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. Many of the children are in the adoptive category of "Special Needs."

In collaboration with the State Permanency Unit, local DFCS case managers prepare families for adoption by conducting information sessions, pre-service training, and home studies. In addition, DFCS case managers prepare children for adoption through candid conversations, preparation of the child life history and listing the children on Georgia's photolisting website.

IF I'M INTERESTED IN ADOPTING, WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?
Call 1-877-210-KIDS (5437)

Children in Georgia who are free for adoption have featured pictures, profiles and videos on www.itsmyturnnowga.com and www.wednesdayschildga.com.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET APPROVED?

From inquiry to approval, the process can take from 4 to 10 months due to the certification and evaluations required as well as the documentation needed to approve an adoptive home. A case manager from the local DFCS office will work with interested families to explain the process and inform them of what is needed.

IS DFCS THE ONLY AGENCY THAT CAN APPROVE ME TO BE AN ADOPTIVE PARENT?

No. DFCS partners with licensed private agencies in developing adoptive families for children who are in the custody of the state. Currently, DFCS has contracts with licensed non-profit and for profit agencies. These agencies provide services such as the recruitment of adoptive homes, conducting home studies, preparing families to adopt, and supervising adoption placements.

Families will be referred to either DFCS or a private partner agency after making the initial inquiry at 1-877-210-KIDS (5437).

WHAT DOES "SPECIAL NEEDS" MEAN?

There are many children in the custody of DFCS awaiting adoption who meet the definition of special needs for the purpose of adoption assistance.

Children who meet the definition of special needs for the purpose of adoption assistance include any child who:

- at the time of adoptive placement has been in the care of a public or private agency or individual other than the legal or biological parent for more than 24 consecutive months

- a child with a physical, mental, or emotional disability as validated by a licensed physician or psychologist
- a child who is a member of sibling group of two or more placed in the same home

WHAT HAPPENS IF ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED AFTER THE ADOPTION IS FINALIZED?

Children who are adopted from DFCS permanent custody are eligible for post adoption services which include but are not limited to: crisis intervention, support groups for teens, training and support services for parents. In order to access the services, the family needs to contact the local DFCS office and talk with the Adoption Assistance case manager.

STATISTICS:

The majority of the children adopted through the state were adopted by foster parents, foster/adoptive parents or relatives. Last year (SFY 2013), approximately 1,017 adoptions were finalized. At any given time, there are approximately 250 children in Georgia who are in need of adoptive families. Various child specific recruitment events, sponsored through the Permanency Unit, regularly feature this group of waiting children. These events include Wednesday's Child Program, Adoption Parties, and match meetings.